

INTRODUCTION

Under New Jersey law, local municipalities are given the power to adopt a master plan, which is "to guide the use of lands within the municipality in a manner which protects public health and safety and promotes the general welfare". The master plan, which is prepared and adopted by the planning board, is typically general in nature, setting forth the policies that are intended to direct public and private development in the community. The actual implementation of the plan is achieved through the adoption by the governing body of various ordinances and programs, including the zoning, site plan and subdivision regulations, the official map and the capital improvement program.

Westfield's first comprehensive master plan was adopted in 1965, and has undergone revisions periodically since then, including a new land use element in 1977, and a housing element and amendments in the late 1980's and 1990, and a comprehensive update in 1991, later amended in 1992. This report is an update of the 1991 master plan and 1990 housing element. While most of the policies of the 1991 plan and 1992 amendment have been continued in this new plan, there are a number of changes. Several zoning revisions are proposed. An updated housing element is incorporated to provide for low and moderate income housing. The community facilities plan and the circulation plan have been revised. The historic preservation element has been expanded.

Stability continues to be a key theme in this master plan. As an almost fully developed community, Westfield does not face the problem of anticipating major new development pressures within its boundaries. Rather, the master plan deals with two general issues. First, the plan seeks to preserve the present quality of life that exists, while accommodating those changes that will improve the community's character. Second, the plan seeks to address the issues of regional growth that effect the Town, most notably, growth in traffic and the need for affordable housing. Change is inevitable; the master plan proposes to accommodate and guide change in a manner that will provide stability and reinforce Westfield's many assets.

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